

# THE IVORY TOWER

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CPYRGHT 5-00001R000300360020-4 WM. F. BUCKLEY, JR.

specific and subversive political ends. To our mind, this kind of undocumented and clearly unexcused personal vilification exceeds the limits both of propriety and of academic privilege . . .

### What Are We Going to Do With the Willmoore Kendalls?

CPYRGHT

If one has tears, one should be prepared to shed them over the dilemma of the academic community as it faces the terrible problem, What are we going to do about the conservatives in our ranks? Here is a caste of very persuasive people whose spokesmen so exquisitely argued the necessity of allowing academic freedom to *anyone* of professional competence during those dark days when the laity questioned the wisdom of allowing Communists to teach, that the arguments and rhetoric fairly stuck to the ceiling. So now there is the problem of how, with all that stuff up there staring you in the face, you're going to police the conservatives?

Here indeed is a tickler, and the academic community has grown gray from worry over it. One can, of course, do everything in one's power to *prevent* conservatives, and at this the academic community is marvelously skilled. To begin with, of course, you indoctrinate the student in the dogmas of Liberalism. If a student of conservative tendency turns to teaching, you get tough—you go easy on the promotions, and the choice appointments, push him around a little, and generally let him know, where it hurts, that it doesn't pay to dally with Obscurantism. That treatment tends to dispose of the majority of potential conservative teachers, tends to persuade them to abandon either their views or their vocation.

Finally, you persuade perdurable survivors to limit their partisanship to issues at least a hundred years old. I know a professor who doesn't really believe the Reform Bill of 1832 should have been passed. He gets on very well with his colleagues, who think of him as quaint, and assimilable, and are on guard only against the possibility that he might discover the present century. There is, so to speak,

an unwritten academic code of Acceptable Behavior in Conservatives. The code specifies: stick to bygone days, dally as much as you like with Burke and Montesquieu and Disraeli; even a discreet flirtation with Paul Elmer More and Irving Babbitt is O.K.; but don't mess around much beyond that.

Now we have really narrowed down the problem. But what is one to do with the Professor Willmoore Kendalls of this world? Take Kendall himself. He is 1) a conservative, 2) a practising Christian, 3) learned, 4) sassy; moreover he 5) writes regularly for NATIONAL REVIEW, and 6) has a tenure appointment! With the elimination of Anastasia, the possibilities open for dealing with him are severely restricted.

A few weeks ago, Scott Sullivan, the very bright and normally very urbane chairman of the *Yale Daily News*, made a Freudian slip so incandescent as to illumine the innermost thoughts of the agonized community Kendall has beleaguered. Mr. Sullivan published an editorial which began by quoting a paragraph from one of Mr. Kendall's columns in NATIONAL REVIEW, raising questions about contemporary qualifications for high academic office.

"By whom," thundered the editorial, "was this analysis written? A political scientist dispassionately viewing the subject in a learned quarterly? A pamphleteer whose sweat-stained prose is passed out at subway stations? A frustrated aspirant to the presidency of Middlebury?"

"No, it is the ill-considered work of Willmoore Kendall, associate professor of political science at Yale [*italics added*], in the superright NATIONAL REVIEW. [Though] not mentioned by name . . . President Griswold is accused of being a tool of the 'Establishment'—Kendall's word [Macauley stole it from Kendall]—bent on

"How nice [here urbanity begins to creep back in] it would be if Mr. Kendall might go the way of Father Halton. But then there is the [in this case, accursed] principle of tenure."

*Eureka!*

Propriety! Perhaps that is the key! Wield that word a little more deftly and you can haltonize any articulate conservative! It has a wonderful effect on the genteel academic world. Apart from a tardy and dutiful letter by the head of Kendall's department, in the spate of letters commenting on the publication of Mr. Sullivan's editorial, only one member of the faculty, an assistant professor of philosophy, registered a protest. Though taking protective cover ("Mr. Kendall's political attitudes seem to me to be fantastic and deplorable") Professor Braybrooke stated that, under academic freedom, "there would be no excuse for suggesting that [Kendall] be shut up." Less aware of the delicacies involved, and perhaps for that reason more faithfully reflecting the lay of community sentiment, Mr. Leslie Epstein, a sophomore, rushed forward—"You may, gentlemen, sign me aboard the Kick-Out Kendall Club."

Yes, Propriety has a brilliant future ahead of it. Those who wonder how Propriety manages to dispose of Kendall while shielding the professor who acclaims the Communist coup d'état in Czechoslovakia as a "great victory for democracy" (as a Yale professor did with impunity), or who tells his students that he will take religion seriously when someone proves to him "you can make hemoglobin out of grape juice" (as a Yale professor did with impunity), or who terms premarital celibacy a "censorious insistence on an outworn code" (as a Yale professor did with impunity)—those who wonder how Propriety can be made to do *all* those things at one and the same time simply don't know how obliging a word can be in the service of the academic community, and an honorable cause.

# ARTS and MANNERS

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RALPH DE TOLEDANO

CPYRGHT

## *Elephantiasis Done Her In*

CPYRGHT

There is a shivery little rumor on Nightmare Alley that all is not well with television. Where Batten talks to Barton and Young nods to Rubicam, a bad case of the collective shakes is increasingly discernible. For that fine feeling, when sponsors break down the doors and come through the windows, is gone. So too, says the rumor, are the sponsors.

Television has developed elephantiasis of the grab-hand and the budget; it is pricing itself out of the field. The trouble has nothing to do with art or the "product." Those three horsemen of the studios—Loathsome, Noisome and Fulsome—can still maintain their superlative standards in boring scripts, and turn up an occasional two-headed child who can sing in counterpoint. Americans still love Bilko, Edward R. Murrow, and John's Other Abcess, and an aroused public has not marched on Madison Avenue.

So there is a mite of irony in the fact that television's troubles are economic. An art so blissfully wedded to commerce and grandiosity has fallen victim to its own standards. The equation is simple: costs in talent, labor, materials and overhead can be met only by an ever-expanding mass audience. It's not merely a case of sponsor greed. By slide rule and IBM, the networks have arrived at a neat, though unflattering figure. To keep the sponsor happy and in business the per-viewer cost of a program must be one-half to seven-tenths of a penny. (In the days of Boss Tweed, the going price of a vote was two dollars, but the universal franchise of TV has cheapened the market.) In short, two million half-penny viewers must snap on their sets for a \$100,000 budget show. Half the adult population must stay home to make a million dollar spectacular a good sponsor's risk.

These are neither new nor secret statistics. More than a year ago, when hearings were held on pay TV by the Senate Interstate Commerce Committee, industry spokesmen said it

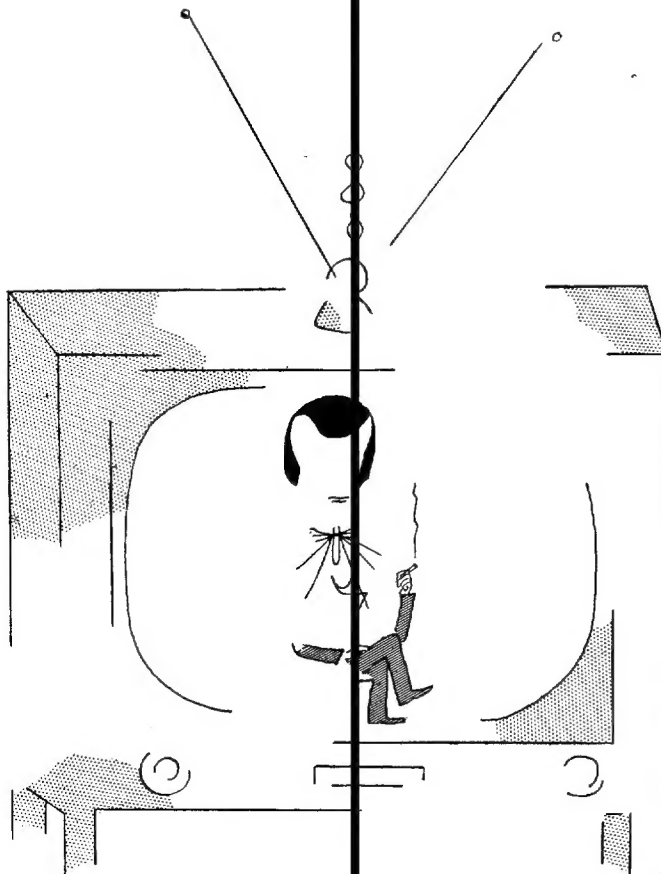
very loud and clear. There was no need for secrecy because the sponsors knew it. Options were beginning to bounce, and the criterion was no longer, "How big?" but "How much?" Though the top programs had no difficulties, and the top sponsors (interested in "prestige") no worries, everything else was marginal.

John P. Cunningham, an advertising executive, lectures openly on the "Index of Boredom" in reviewing television's decline. Video viewers, he warns, just aren't paying any mind to what flickers on the screen, though they still turn on their sets automati-

cally, and the entire medium has been suffering from a kind of "boredom." He is worried because the "ruthless law of the decimal point" puts bad entertainment ahead of good, because an audience of fifteen million people for an expensive performance by the Old Vic troupe is considered a failure by the men who control TV. And he adds:

It might be worthwhile to take a look at what has happened to top ratings while all this has been going on. As you see, they are down. Top ratings today would all be medium ratings five years ago. The top five shows had a rating in 1952 of 57.9. They're down this year to 41.5. What does this mean? . . . Our agency's research shows clearly that the grumbling is not confined to the professional critics. The Index of Boredom has been rising steadily. . . . As far as we advertisers are concerned, it is a Time to Pause.

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Kreuttner

"The name of the program is 'Garbage to Garbage.' The following unbiased, yet completely sympathetic interview will be with Dr. Summersault Tripskip, Rhodes Scholar, recipient of three Peabody Awards, and further distinguished by having taken the Fifth Amendment 158 times in eleven minutes. Later in the program we will visit Hollywood's dazzling Claire de Cleave, as a diversionary tactic."